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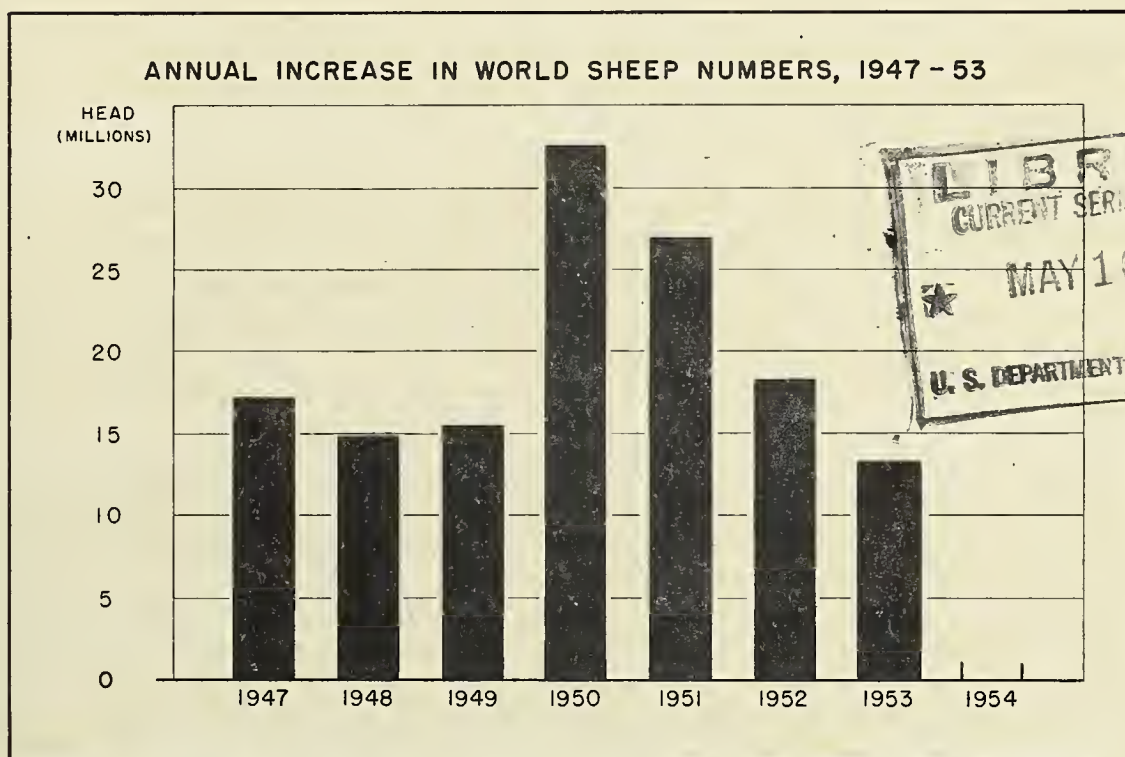
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WORLD SHEEP NUMBERS IN 1953 AND 1954



World sheep numbers in 1950 had increased to about prewar levels after reaching a low point in 1946. Since 1950 they have continued upward and the world total in 1954 of around 841 million head was 12 per-cent greater than the 1936-40 average. World wool prices rose sharply after the outbreak of war in Korea and sheep numbers increased 32 million head in 1950. Increases in the past 3 years have been considerably smaller. The gain in 1953 of 13 million was the smallest since 1946.

World sheep numbers continued upward in 1953 for the sixth consecutive year. A new record of around 841 million head was on hand at the beginning of 1954, 2 percent more than in 1953 and 17 percent more than the 1946-50 average, on the basis of the latest information collected and analyzed by the Foreign Agricultural Service.

Sheep numbers increased in most important producing areas in 1953, except North America. Increases were recorded for most major geographic areas. Numbers increased 5 percent in Oceania, 2 percent in both Asia and Africa, with smaller gains in Europe and South America. However, the increase for the world in 1953 was only 13 million compared with 18 million a year earlier, 27 million in 1951 and 33 million in 1950. The very sharp rise in world wool prices following the outbreak of the war in Korea intensified interest in sheep production and the increase in numbers has continued despite the fact that world wool prices are now materially below the peaks reached in 1950-51. Favorable returns to producers for wool and a strong demand for mutton and lamb in recent years have favored expansion in most important sheep areas.

On the other hand, high costs in relation to returns from sheep, greater profits from cattle and other farm enterprises, and shortages of competent labor have resulted in a marked downturn in numbers in the United States. Rainfall has been below average for 3 years over large areas of Texas and the Southwest which has reduced the numbers there. The United States total, except for 1950 and 1951, is now the lowest of annual records dating back to 1867.

Sheep numbers changed little in the important producing areas of South America during 1953 and in several countries on that continent sheep are facing increased competition from cattle.

SHEEP: Estimated world total, by continent or area, averages 1936-40 and 1946-50, annual 1953 and 1954.

Continent or area	Average		1953	1954	Increase (+) or decrease (-)	
	1936-40	1946-50			1954	1954
					1936-40	1953
	: Thousands	: Thousands	: Thousands	: Thousands	: Percent	: Percent
North America	: 59,700	: 42,800	: 39,100	: 38,400	: -26	: -2
Europe	: 123,800	: 109,300	: 125,200	: 126,700	: +2	: +1
U.S.S.R.	: 66,000	: 67,700	: 92,000	: -	: -	: -
Asia	: 152,600	: 143,900	: 166,200	: 169,400	: +11	: +2
South America	: 100,900	: 117,500	: 126,400	: 127,600	: +26	: +1
Africa	: 99,700	: 98,300	: 119,700	: 122,000	: +22	: +2
Oceania	: 144,000	: 136,300	: 159,300	: 167,000	: +16	: +5
Total	: 746,700	: 720,800	: 827,900	: 841,100	: +13	: +2

1/ Preliminary

The important sheep producing countries showing increases in 1953 include Australia, Argentina, India, the Union of South Africa, and New Zealand. Also gains were registered in Uruguay and the United Kingdom. Apparently numbers have changed little in Spain during the past few years. It is doubtful if they increased in the U.S.S.R. because of considerable losses of sheep in the principal producing areas as a result of the severe winter.

Sheep numbers have reached new high records in Australia and New Zealand and cattle numbers there also are at high levels. Australia now has around 130 million sheep compared with an average of 103 million in 1946-50. There now total around 37 million sheep in New Zealand compared with 33 million during 1946-50. Prices of lamb and mutton have steadily increased in these countries since the early years of World War II and wool prices at the level of the last two years have been attractive to producers with their relatively low costs. More effective control of rabbits in Australia has increased feed supplies for domestic livestock and grazing conditions have continued favorable. Some further increase in livestock output in New Zealand seems probable due to the better use of land and bringing new lands into production. New Zealand has a remarkably high productivity of lambs and wool per breeding ewe. The 23.8 million breeding ewes in 1953 produced a lamb crop of 23.2 million or more than 97 lambs per 100 ewes. The percentage lamb crop in each of the preceeding two years was over 94.

Production of sheep is at an unusually high level in Uruguay and Brazil. Numbers in Peru have tended to decrease in recent years, while numbers in Chile have generally increased.

Sheep numbers showed mixed trends in Europe last year but the total for the continent was slightly above a year earlier and moderately above prewar. Increases were recorded for France, Greece, Ireland, the United Kingdom, Portugal and Yugoslavia. Numbers in Greece and the United Kingdom have shown remarkable gains in recent years but their numbers are not up to prewar. Producers in England have been given special incentives to increase production, including price supports to producers. Sheep numbers dropped off in Italy and Austria last year.

Since the end of World War II numbers of sheep in the U.S.S.R. have increased substantially and in 1953 they were approaching the record level of 1928. It is believed that the upward trend was slowed down last winter and numbers may have actually decreased. A severe winter was experienced in the principal sheep areas and hay and other feed supplies were inadequate. Sheep are predominately raised on collective and State farms where they often do not receive proper care. The wool and a share of the lamb and mutton produced are delivered to the State at low fixed prices although they have been raised recently. The U.S.S.R. is a net importer of wool. Efforts are being made to increase livestock numbers and productivity in general and to increase feed production. Emphasis is being given to increasing yields of wool and meat per sheep and to increase the proportion of fine woolled sheep produced. Fleece weights of the unimproved coarse wool sheep are extremely low.

SHEEP: Number in specified countries, averages 1936-40 and 1946-50, annual 1949-1954

Continent and Country	Month of estimate	Average		1950	1951	1952	1953 2/	1954 2/
		1936-40	1946-50					
		Thousands	Thousands	Thousands	Thousands	Thousands	Thousands	Thousands
NORTH AMERICA								
Canada	Dec. 1/	2,651	1,681	1,259	1,268	1,016	1,105	1,161
Guatemala	July	273	665	712	-	-	-	-
Mexico	Dec. 31 1/	2/4/ 4,809	4,900	4,902	5,000	5,000	4,800	5,000
United States	Jan. 1	51,404	34,993	29,826	30,635	32,088	31,861	30,902
Estimated total		59,700	42,800	37,300	38,200	39,400	39,100	38,400
EUROPE								
Austria	Dec. 1 1/	316	419	375	400	365	350	297
Belgium	Jan. 1	187	132	121	116	124	114	-
Denmark	July 15	147	93	61	56	48	40	-
Finland	June	1,007	1,071	1,220	1,096	1,126	998	-
France	Fall 1/	9,648	7,257	7,480	7,511	7,585	7,674	6/ 7,831
Germany, Western	Dec. 1 1/	1,889	2,274	2,020	1,642	1,666	1,544	1,347
Greece	Dec. 31 1/	8,304	6,698	6,337	6,793	7,348	7,784	8,270
Iceland	Dec. 31 1/	624	462	402	416	410	-	-
Ireland	June	3,076	2,229	2,385	2,616	2,857	2,929	-
Italy	Jan. 1	9,650	9,624	10,295	10,141	10,002	9,950	9,917
Netherlands	May	636	459	390	360	383	424	-
Norway	June 20	1,742	1,716	1,812	1,929	1,987	1,985	-
Portugal	Dec. 31 1/	6/10/3,890	-	-	5,000	-	5,000	5,200
Spain	Dec. 31 1/	20,000	22,500	-	-	26,200	-	-
Sweden	Summer	398	368	279	261	256	241	-
Switzerland	April	177	189	-	191	-	-	-
United Kingdom	June	26,112	19,032	20,430	19,984	21,655	22,429	-
Yugoslavia	Jan.	9,796	9,000	10,042	10,273	10,518	11,400	-
Total above		97,700	87,900	94,200	95,200	97,800	99,900	101,400
Other Europe		26,100	21,400	24,000	24,200	25,000	25,300	25,300
Total Europe		123,800	109,300	118,200	119,400	122,800	125,200	126,700
U.S.S.R. (Europe and Asia)								
	Jan. 1	66,000	67,700	78,000	86,000	90,000	92,000	-
ASIA								
Cyprus 11/	March	300	302	287	-	295	313	-
Iran	Mar. 21	14,497	12,800	13,572	14,672	16,200	17,000	17,550
Iraq	Mar. 31	7,090	7,323	7,490	9,000	10,000	-	-
Syria 11/	Dec. 31 1/	2,060	2,963	2,443	3,250	3,232	3,400	-
Turkey	Dec. 31 1/	21,656	24,053	23,073	23,083	24,833	26,561	28,000
China 13/	May	26,000	-	-	-	-	-	-
India	Jan. 1	41,000	38,200	38,900	-	39,975	-	-
Indonesia	Dec. 31 1/	1,614	1,805	1,999	-	-	2,565	2,693
Pakistan	Jan. 1	8,000	6,150	-	-	8,000	-	-
Estimated total		152,600	148,900	150,700	156,600	162,200	166,200	169,400

SOUTH AMERICA

Argentina	July	5/	44,900	50,000	45,000	47,000	50,500	51,500	51,000	51,500
Bolivia	Dec. 31	1/	2,608	4,000	-	-	-	-	-	-
Brazil	June	5/	11,438	14,413	-	-	1/	15,891	16,264	-
Chile	Dec. 31	1/	5,855	6,050	6,000	6,000	-	-	6,500	-
Colombia	Dec. 31	1/	916	1,110	1,061	1,198	1,339	-	1,465	1,550
Falkland Islands	Dec. 31	1/	604	610	604	611	597	584	594	-
Paraguay	Dec. 31	1/	159	254	252	202	216	200	-	-
Peru	Dec. 31	1/	14,900	17,852	18,518	17,751	16,268	15,904	16,200	-
Uruguay	May	3/	17,931	21,600	23,000	23,000	23,409	27,000	28,500	1/
Estimated total			100,900	117,500	114,800	115,600	118,400	124,500	126,400	127,600

AFRICA

Algeria 11/	April		6,180	3,486	3,839	4,531	5,321	6,028	-	-
Anglo-Egyptian Sudan		5/	2,500	5,375	5,600	5,600	6,000	-	-	-
Kenya	Dec. 31	1/	3,274	3,260	3,350	-	3,400	-	-	-
Tanganyika	Mar. 31	5/	1,780	2,263	2,153	-	2,445	2,339	2,515	-
Uganda	February	5/	1,285	1,018	-	1,066	1,035	1,051	-	-
Basutoland	July 1	5/	1,443	1,630	1,558	-	1,564	-	-	-
Egypt		5/	1,771	1,943	1,903	1,932	1,944	1,959	1,864	-
Ethiopia (incl. Eritrea)			-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
French Morocco 11/	Dec. 31	1/	9,976	7,939	8,474	9,149	10,375	10,960	9,945	19,500
French West Africa and Togo		5/	8,674	9,000	9,400	9,700	-	-	10,800	10,400
Madagascar 11/	Dec. 31	1/	193	171	177	204	244	284	365	-
Mozambique	Dec. 31	1/	84	63	64	70	74	82	76	-
Northern Rhodesia	Dec. 31	1/	36	36	36	36	47	39	38	-
Southern Rhodesia	Dec. 31	1/	310	312	302	315	307	316	336	-
South West Africa		5/	2,972	2,622	2,628	-	-	-	-	-
Spanish Morocco 11/	Dec. 31	1/	481	593	665	684	-	-	-	-
Tunisia 11/	August		3,026	2,010	1,587	1,885	2,361	3,060	3,420	3,000
Union of South Africa			39,899	31,542	31,908	31,361	34,823	25,480	-	-
Estimated total			99,700	98,300	100,300	103,800	113,900	117,800	119,700	122,000

OCEANIA

Australia	Mar. 31	1/	112,571	103,261	108,735	112,891	115,596	117,647	123,081	130,000
New Zealand	Apr. 30		31,352	32,973	32,845	33,857	34,786	35,384	36,193	37,000
Estimated total			144,000	136,300	141,600	146,800	150,400	153,000	159,300	167,000
Estimated world total			746,700	720,800	735,100	750,400	782,900	809,700	827,900	841,100

1/ End of year estimates (October to December) included under following year for comparisons and totals, thus for Canada the December 1, 1948 estimate of 1,322,000 head is shown under 1949. 2/ Preliminary. 3/ Census or estimate for single year. 4/ June. 5/ Average for 2 to 4 years only. 6/ Official statistics; may be underestimates of actual numbers. 7/ September. 8/ March. 9/ Spring. 10/ Census, December 31, 1940. 11/ Data include only number taxed. 12/ A new series of estimates was inaugurated by the Directorate of Veterinary Service in 1951. 13/ Includes China Proper (22 provinces), Manchuria, Jehol and Sinkiang (Turkistan).

Foreign Agricultural Service. Prepared or estimated on the basis of official statistics of foreign governments, reports of United States Foreign Service Officers, and other information. Data for countries having changed boundaries relate to present territory. Totals include estimates for countries for which official statistics are unavailable.--April 1954.

Sheep numbers in recent years have made substantial gains in Iran, Iraq, Syria, and Turkey and production of coarse wool has increased materially. They have also increased markedly in Indonesia. Numbers in Pakistan are now estimated at about the prewar level.

Numbers continued to increase in Ethiopia and Eritrea, French Morocco, French West Africa and Togo. There has been a marked increase in sheep production in Algeria since 1946 and numbers are now around the prewar level. Sheep numbers in the Union of South Africa and South West Africa are still considerably below prewar but have been increasing in recent years.

The United States is the only major sheep producing country in the world where sheep numbers have not been increasing in recent years. United States numbers were at a record high of 56.2 million head at the beginning of 1942 and then declined each year reaching a low of 29.8 million head in early 1950. Numbers increased slightly in 1950 and 1951 but started to decline again in 1952 and 1953.

Sheep numbers in Canada have followed the general course of numbers in the United States and sheep production in Canada now is at a low level. On December 1, 1953 the number on farms was only 56 percent of the 1935-39 average and 69 percent of the 1945-49 average. Numbers dropped 20 percent in 1951 but have continued to increase in the past 2 years. Imports of sheep and lambs from the United States during 1953 totaled 3,536 head and were the largest in at least 7 years. Imports of mutton and lamb also were larger than in recent years. Shipments of sheep and lambs to the United States in 1952 and 1953 were small compared with the preceeding 4 years. A foot-and-mouth disease quarantine prohibited shipments from February 25, 1952 to March 1, 1953 and sharply lower prices in the United States in late 1953 during the period of seasonally large marketings, discouraged this movement.

A summary of this information was published in the April 26, 1954 issue of Foreign Crops and Markets.

This is one of a series of regularly scheduled reports on world agricultural production approved by the Foreign Agricultural Service Committee on Foreign Crop and Livestock Statistics. It is based in part upon U. S. Foreign Service reports.